

## **GREENING MILPITAS**

### **Putting the Right Tree in the Right Place**

The fall is a good time to plant trees when the weather is cool and the soil is moist and still warm. The warm soil encourages root growth, and the shorter cooler days reduce transpiration - the loss of water through the leaves.

One of the most important steps in tree planting is to put the right tree in the right place. Trees that are hardy, durable, highly adaptable, and have more positive characteristics than objectionable ones, are the most valuable investment. How well your tree will perform is also based on the planting site, the way the tree is planted, as well as the care it receives after planting.

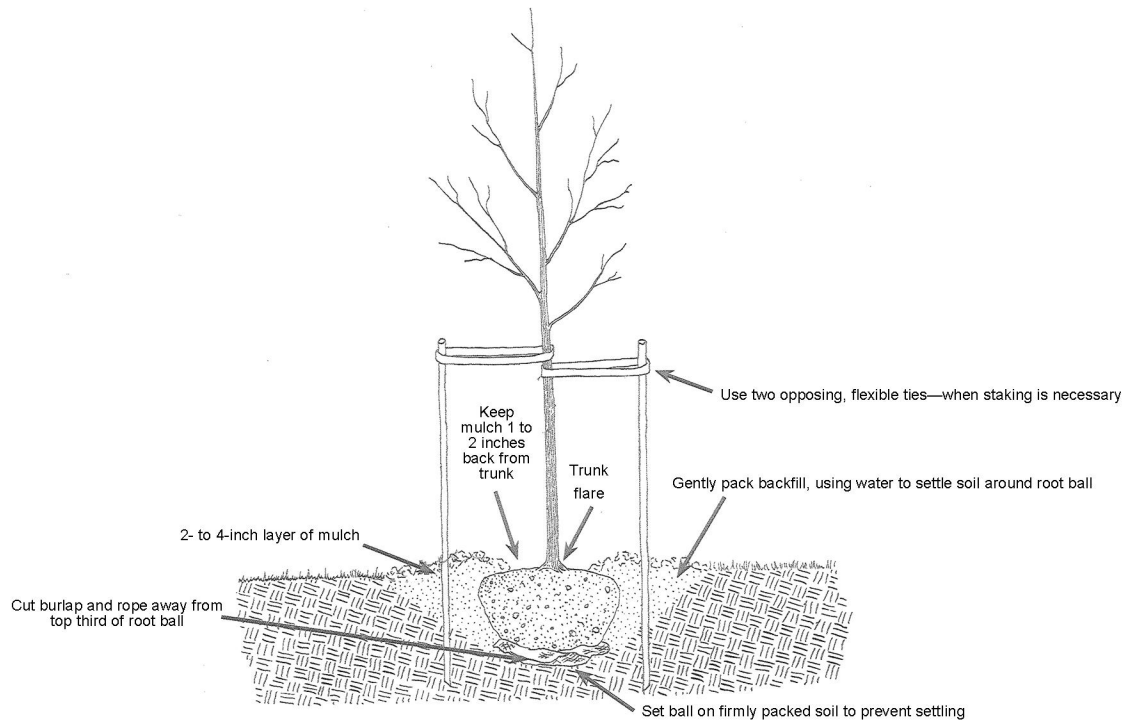
Here are a few tips on tree planting that will help you maximize your tree planting investment.

1. **Dig a shallow, broad planting hole.** Make the hole wide, as much as three times the diameter of the root ball, but only as deep as the root ball.
2. **Identify the trunk flare.** If the trunk flare is not visible before planting, you may have to remove some soil from the top of the root ball so that you can determine how deep the hole needs to be for proper planting.
3. **Place the tree at the proper height.** It is better to plant a tree a little high, 1-2" above the base of the trunk flare, to allow for settling.
4. **Straighten the tree in the hole.** Before you begin backfilling the hole, have someone view the tree from several directions to confirm that the tree is straight.
5. **Fill the hole, gently but firmly.** Take care to firmly pack soil to eliminate air pockets that may cause roots to dry out.
6. **Stake the tree, if necessary.** Some trees can stand alone, while others need support to stand against the wind, or grow upright.
7. **Mulch at the base of the tree.** Mulch acts as a blanket to hold moisture, protect against harsh temperatures, and reduces the competition from grass and weeds.
8. **Follow-up care.** Keep the soil moist but not soaked. Prune sparingly after planting, and do not remove lower branches along the trunk. These lower branches will enable the trunk to develop a strong girth.

The City of Milpitas Public Works Department is preparing for street tree planting in the Manor residential neighborhood, on outlying streets east of Marylinn Drive, and streets surrounding Hall Park.

Most residential properties have a street tree planting easement that was established when the subdivision was developed. The easement typically runs 10 feet from the face of the curb into the residential property. The original street tree on each residential lot was planted in this street tree planting easement. Over time, residential street trees have been lost, and in some neighborhoods the street tree vacancy rate is 35%. The goal of the residential street tree planting program is to replace street trees by putting the right tree in the right place – suitable trees in appropriate vacant planting sites.

On October 30, 2007, from 6:00 to 7:30 pm the Public Works Department will be conducting a Tree Planting Workshop at Spangler Elementary School's Gymnasium as a kickoff to the November tree planting. This will be a great opportunity to see the trees that will be planted, participate in a tree planting demo (weather permitting), and meet the city staff who take care of city street trees.



*For more information, contact the Public Works Department at (408) 586-2601.*

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